Political Actors and the Challenges of Peacebuilding in Cote d'Ivoire

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to interrogate the origin of the Ivorian conflict as characterized by several political actors at different times and challenges of peacebuilding inherent in the history of the country. The quest and tussle for power, issues of identity, rights over land ownership, ethnicity, and military incursion into politics amidst others formed the bane and basis of the Ivorian conflict. Scholarly works have largely focused attention to an array of conflicts in Cote D'Ivoire with little attention given to the classification of political actors involved, and the context of challenges of peace-building in the conflict situations. The study explored the political actors, and how they have contributed to the conflict as well as the challenges of peace-building in Cote d'Ivoire. Paul Lederach's Conflict Transformation Theory served as the framework while the descriptive design was adopted for the study. Primarily, content analysis as a method of data analysis was used in analyzing data collected for the purpose of this study. This was premised on the source of data which relied majorly but not limited to written text, interviews and online sources. The study identified both internal and external political actors and as well explored activities towards peacebuilding and the challenges of peace-building within the Ivorian conflicts. The study, therefore, concluded and recommended that, stemming the tide of future relapse into violent conflict in Cote d'Ivoire, it is imperative to have a self-sustaining and peacebuilding process in the country.

Keywords: Conflict, Peacebuilding, Political actors, Côte d'Ivoire.

INTRODUCTION

There were prospects that the end of the Cold War in the 90s would usher in a peace dividend for African continent, nevertheless the reality has remained a bit more complex (Chris, 2020). Whilst some states implemented liberal democratic practices which include: regular elections, free market economies, and multiparty political systems, but these remained insufficient to suppress high levels of internal discontent – which, in some nations, actually resulted into civil wars, intrastate and armed conflict. How, the dimension of these violent conflicts has changed over time whereby some conflicts of the 1990s and 2000s were for power contestations at the level of the state by groups with vibrant political goals, and key outcomes with inclusive legitimacy (World Peace Foundation, 2016). In the West African sub-region whereby for

instance; in Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda, dictatorial regimes, one-party states, and military rulers were ousted, and further inclusive politics triumphed. This situation, however, appeared in divergence to several armed conflicts nowadays, where the drives of the belligerents are multifaceted: a desire to break away from the dominant state, rather than to take control of its levers (ACCORD, 2015). Therefore, these factors have posed challenges to sustainable peacebuilding in Africa.

Also, in a situation where many areas are afflicted with internal and international conflicts, making peace a tangible reality is of critical importance. Preventive measures, peace-making as well as post-conflict peace-building pose enormous challenges and call for action to eliminate sources of conflict and violence (United Nations 1998) Kwesi and Sarjoh (2009) views the West Africa's relative stability following a period of violent and protracted conflicts in the 1990s as being infested by increasing attack from a range of existing and emerging threats. These threats include military interventions in the political arena, constitutional or electoral manipulation, international criminal network, religious intolerance, communal violence and natural disasters (Kwesi & Sarjoh, 2009). The origin of the Ivorian conflict has been characterized by several actors at different times in the history of the country. The quest and tussle for power, issues of identity, rights over land ownership, ethnicity, and military incursion into politics amidst others formed the bane and basis of the Ivorian conflict. When violent conflict erupts, a genuine effort is needed to exhaust political options, before such confrontation intensifies (Agunbiade, 2023).

The contemporary violent conflicts in Cote D'Ivoire, cannot be perceived as conventional 'wars' any longer. Neither are they clashes between states, nor are the conventional civil wars between a state government and an internal armed political opposition aimed at the overthrow of that government or secession. Rather, they are characterized by an entanglement of a host of actors, issues and motives (Kaldor 1999; Duffield 2001; Muenkler 2002). Lederach asserts that resources for peace are socio-cultural and socio-economic in nature while restoration of relationships depends on creating dynamic conflict-responsive peace-building infrastructure (Lederach 1999). However, these scholarly works pay little attention to the classification of such actors, neither were they identified within the context of the challenges of peace-building in conflict situations. Arising from the above, the study explores political actors and how they have contributed to the conflict as well as the challenges of peace-building in Cote d'Ivoire. This study will identify both internal and external political actors as well as explore activities towards peace-building and the challenges of peace-building within the Ivorian conflict. Primarily, content analysis as a method of data analysis will be used in analyzing data collected for the purpose of this study. This is premised on the source of data which will rely majorly but not limited to written text, interviews and online sources.

Conceptual Clarification
Certain key terms have been identified such as: Political-actors, Politics, Peace-building, Cote d'Ivoire and Conflict.

Political Actors:
Who are the primary and secondary actors in the conflict, including spoilers, peacemakers and others? Actors are parties to the conflict, having some measure of involvement either directly or indirectly. These actors could be primary actors or secondary actors while in some cases

they could present themselves as shadow parties as the case may be. Political actors within the context of this study can be regarded as parties to the conflict with major or minor influence over who gets what, when and how in the course of the conflict (Agunbiade, 2023). The major actors in the Ivorian conflict are the government and two rebel parties. Under the former President Laurent Gbagbo led government, the Ivorian government is regarded as strongly southern-ethnocentric, representative of Baoule, Bete ethnic groups, and with a strong emphasis on what is popularly known as 'Ivorite' or 'Pure-Ivorian-ness'.

The rebel comprises of two militia forces. One of these is the Mouvement Populaire du Grand Quest (MPIGO or popular Ivorian movement for the great west) which is based at the western border of Cote d'Ivoire. This group also contains insurgents from neighboring Liberia and former Revolutionary United Front (RUF) Sierra Leonean soldiers. The second rebel group is Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix (MJP, or movement for justice and peace) which controls the northern part of Cote d'Ivoire (Agunbiade, 2023).

Peace Building:
Peace-building is a post cold war concept and practice. The term first appeared in the 1992 report An Agenda for Peace, in which UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali defined it broadly as "action to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict" (United Nations, 1992). Peace-building builds on the assumption that the introduction of peace building as a legitimate area for UN attention reflected post-cold war optimism about the potential for international collective action to resolve violent conflict among and within states.

Originally, peacebuilding referred to action to identify and support structures to consolidate peace in post-conflict countries in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. In the 1990s, the concept became more expansive, combining conflict prevention, conflict management and post conflict reconstruction (Barnett, M., Kim, H., O'Donnell, M., & Sitea, L. 2007). Today, peace building is no longer an exact term; it often needs the qualifier "post conflict" peace building to refer primarily to the non-military or civilian dimension of international efforts to support countries emerging from conflict – even though t might accompany or succeed military operations. During the 1990s, peace building was seen as an international necessity and responsibility. It represented a collective commitment by the United Nations and other international actors to redress sources of violent conflict in conflict torn societies while preparing the grounds for sustainable peace and development (United Nations, 2001)

Politics:
The concept of politics, particularly within the context of Côte d'Ivoire, is often clouded by public disillusionment due to decades of elite manipulation, exclusionary practices, and the instrumentalization of ethnicity for political gain—factors which have contributed to widespread perceptions of politics as deceitful or self-serving. However, political science scholars like David Easton (1965) define politics as the authoritative allocation of values in society, while Harold Lasswell famously framed it as determining "who gets what, when, and how," highlighting its fundamental role in distributing power and resolving societal conflicts. In contemporary Côte d'Ivoire, politics has become the arena where identity, citizenship, and historical grievances are negotiated—sometimes peacefully, sometimes violently—

demonstrating that while it can be misused, politics remains central to the struggle over inclusion, legitimacy, and the construction of the postcolonial state.

Conflict:
Conflict can be understood as a contest between individuals or groups driven by opposing needs, values, beliefs, or goals. Schelling (1960) conceptualises strategic conflict as a form of bargaining, where the outcome for one actor depends on the decisions of the other, highlighting the interdependent nature of such struggles. Similarly, Deutsch (1973) views conflict as arising from incompatible actions, where one party obstructs or diminishes the effectiveness of another's activities. In the context of Côte d'Ivoire, these definitions are particularly relevant, as the nation's protracted crises—rooted in contestations over identity, citizenship, and political legitimacy—reflect strategic bargaining between elites and disruptive intergroup dynamics that have undermined social cohesion and national unity.

An Overview of the West African Country: Cote D'ivoire
Ivory Coast or Cote d'Ivoire, officially the republic of Cote d'Ivoire is a country in West Africa. Cote d'Ivoire is bounded by Ghana towards the east while it is bounded by Liberia and Guinea on the west coast. It is bounded by Burkina Faso (Upper Volta) and Mali towards the north and the Gulf of Guinea by the south. Ivory Coast's de jury and official capital is Yamoussoukro and its biggest city is the port of Abidjan (Encarta, 2009). The country has an area of 322,462 sq km (124,503 sq mi). In March 1983, President Houphouet-Boigny made Yamoussoukro the political and administrative capital of Ivory Coast, as the city was his birthplace. This marked the fourth movement of the country's capital city in a century. Ivory Coast's previous capital cities were Grand-Bassam (1893), Bingerville (1900), and Abidjan (1933).

Major economic activities take place in Abidjan, and it is officially designated as the "economic capital" of the country. Capital is Yamoussoukro, while currency is West African CFA franc. Population is 20.32 million (2013) according to World Bank. Current president is Alassane Quattara with strong executive powers while Daniel Kablan Duncan is the Prime minister (Wikipedia 2025, July 17). Cote d'Ivoire was originally made up of numerous isolated settlements; today it represents more than sixty distinct tribes, including the Baoule, Bete, Senoufou, Agni, Malinke, Dan and Lobi. Cote d'Ivoire attracted both French and Portuguese merchants in the 15th century who were in search of Ivory and slaves. French traders set up establishments early in the 19th century, and in 1842, the French obtained territorial concessions from local tribes, gradually extending their influence along the coast and inland. The area was organized as a territory in 1893, became an autonomous republic in the French union after World War II, and achieved independence on Aug, 7, 1960. Cote d'Ivoire formed a custom union 1959 with Dahomey (Benin), Niger, and Burkina Faso. The nation's economy is one of the most developed in sub-Saharan Africa. It is the world's largest exporter of cocoa and one of the largest exporters of coffee.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
This study adopts Paul Lederach's Conflict Transformation Theory, which emphasizes peacebuilding as a relational and systemic process grounded in local socio-cultural contexts (Lederach, 1999; 2005). Lederach contends that durable peace emerges from inclusive, multi-level engagement that transforms relationships and addresses structural injustices. Applied to Côte d'Ivoire, the framework helps to interrogate the roles of diverse internal and external

political actors and the socio-political challenges to peacebuilding. By contextualizing conflict actors beyond binary state/non-state classifications, this study aligns with contemporary insights on complex conflicts (Kaldor, 2013; Richmond & Mitchell, 2021) and seeks pathways to sustainable, actor-responsive peace.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This study adopted a case study research design that identifies the various political actors in Cote d'Ivoire. Data were derived through Primary and secondary sources. Primary data source includes Key Informant Interviews, In-depth Interviews and Focused Group Discussions with purposively selected respondents. Materials from texts, journals, online sources and the *Centre de Recherche et d'action pour la Paix* (CERAP) helped to understand the Ivorian peacebuilding.

A Critical Exposure of the Crisis with Multiple Root Causes

Lancaster Carol (1994) posits that Africa's grave economic crisis was triggered in the early 1980s by an unfavorable international environment and failures of economic policy and management by African governments (Lancaster, 1994). According to Carol, the African problem is both internal coupled with an unfavorable external (international) environment. In Robert Kaplan's (1994) famous article, 'The coming Anarchy', it refers to West Africa as "a natural point of departure for my report on what the political character of our planet is likely to be in the twenty first century" (Kaplan 1994). In his argument, he stressed that "Cote d'Ivoire, once a model of Third World success, is becoming a case study in Third World catastrophe" (Kaplan, 1994).

Stewart (2002) asserts that where there are social, economic and political inequalities, "coinciding with cultural differences, culture could become a powerful mobilizing agent" that could lead to political violence (Stewart 2002). Stewart, in order to proffer better clarification, did not only argue that the existence of severe inequalities between culturally defined groups, which she calls "horizontal inequalities", might cause different forms of political disturbances, including civil war, she also stressed that this kind of inequality is different from the 'normal' definition of inequality (Stewart 2000). Social, economic and political inequality within the context of this study is a veritable tool and source of conflict.

According to Stewart (2002), unequal access to political, economic and social resources by different cultural groups can reduce individual welfare of individuals in the loosing group over and above what their individual position would merit, because their self-esteem is bound up with the progress of the group. Stewart (2002) went further that the greater consequence is the argument that where there are such inequalities in resource access and outcomes, coinciding with cultural differences, culture can become a powerful mobilizing agent that can lead to a range of political disturbance. Disturbances arising from horizontal inequalities may take the form of sporadic riots, as has occurred, for example, in the towns of Yorkshire in Britain or various cities in the United States of America; more extreme manifestations are civil wars, such as the Biafran and Eritrean attempts to gain independence; massacres, as occurred in Burundi and Rwanda; local and international terrorism; and the civil war in Cote d'Ivoire.

Unveiling the Political Actors in the Cote d'Ivoire Conflict

In every society, there are several sectors making up the entire system of such society, where the political system is not an exception. Stakeholders and political actors who determine the

direction of political activities in a country can be regarded as the political actors of such country. Politics is all about vested interest and how such interests are achieved. Political actors could be individuals, group of individuals, organizations, political parties and counties who have vested interest in the authoritative allocation of values or who gets 'what, when and how'. For clarity in nomenclature, political actors in a country have nothing to do with gender where men and women have taken over the mantle of leadership.

Bernard (2009) asserts that the key actors in the Ivorian conflict are the government and two rebel parties. The Ivorian government was regarded as strongly southern-ethnocentric, representative of the Baoule and Bete ethnic groups, and with a strong emphasis on what is popularly known as 'Ivorite'or 'pure-Ivorian-ness' (Bernard, 2009). At the outbreak of the conflict, Laurent Gbagbo was the country's president and he was elected in a controversial election in 1998 (Bernard, 2009). Gbagbo's party is the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), which used its parliamentary majority to put in place an electorate centered on the controversy of full 'Ivorite; citizenship.

The political issue at the heart of the conflict is a constitutional one. Within the ambits of the constitution, the president should be a 'pure Ivorian', in that the percentage of the presidential candidate should be full-blood Ivorian without a mix from other countries, such as from its Burkina Faso or Mali neighbors. This part of the constitution was challenged in 1993 by Quattara, a presidential candidate from the north. Quattara claimed that this constitutional requirement was not an original provision but an insertion orchestrated to bar him from contesting the presidential election and to favor Henri Bedie, a presidential candidate from the south. By extension, the provision was meant to prevent other potential northern candidates from acceding to the presidency in Cote d'Ivoire within the context of 'Ivorite' ideology and difference (International crisis group, Quoted in Bernard, 2009).

The ethnic-economic connection is central to understanding the Ivorian conflict. Northern Cote d'Ivoire is underdeveloped and its people live in abject poverty and have limited income-earning opportunities and access to social services (Bernard, 2009). Sandrine Mesple-Somps (2008) argues that the northern Ivorian suffers from stark income inequality. The consequence imposed by being born to a northern farmer, the most common occupation, is an income well below that of southerners (Sandrine 2008, Quoted in Bernard, 2009).

According to Mesplé-Somps (2008):

> *Non-egalitarian public policies have been implemented since the colonial period to nowadays: farmers are used to finance [a] public budget that [is] almost [all] spent to finance urban facilities (much more in Abidjan than in other towns). Dualism against agriculture has been coupled with an unequal access to education. [Both these] elements induce low intergenerational mobility that reinforces inequality of opportunity.*

This aspect of structurally induced inequality of opportunities has continually drawn the ire of the educated Ivorian northerners, mostly from the army and the academic institutions, as this quote from Soro illustrates:

> *If you are from the North, you are subhuman, according to the government. We want a united Côte d'Ivoire. We want a country that lives in harmony and includes everyone. (Quoted in Bernard, 2009).*

The conflict in Cote d'Ivoire took such a magnitude due to its internal and external political actors who played certain roles at different points in time. Critical steps will be taken in this paper to understand the political actors in Cote d'Ivoire whereas the absence of such will give little or no meaning to understanding the Ivorian conflict. The political actors in the Ivorian conflict have been predominantly of three categories, viz; Primary actors, Secondary actors as well as Shadow parties (actors). Considering the role of political actors in the Ivorian conflict, the impact of political parties gave impetus to the success of some internal political actors. While these political parties serve as bedrock and footings for political actors, it garnered the institutional framework for which the entire political system has been built over the decade.

There are four major political parties in Cote d'Ivoire and they include:
1. Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire, also known as Parti démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire- PDCI was established in 1946 by Henri Konan Bedie.
2. Ivorian Popular Front, also known as Front populaire ivoirien- FBI was established in 1982 by Pascal Affi N'Guessan
3. Ivorian worker's party, also known as Parti ivoirien des travailleur-PIT was established in 1990 by Francis Wodie
4. Rally of Republicans, also known as Rassemblement des républicains-RDR was established by Allassane Quattara in 1994.

Other parliamentary parties include the following: Union of democrats of Cote d'Ivoire (Union des Démocrates de Côte d'Ivoire), Movement of future forces (Mouvement des Forces de l'Avenir), and Alliance for a new Cote d'Ivoire (Alliance pour une Nouvelle Côte d'Ivoire) Agunbiade (2023)

The Ivorian conflict has been predominantly centered on a series of extreme political instability, accompanied by significant political violence. Political violence does not occur in isolation, they are triggered by certain factors and actors at work. The forces that promote the occurrence of political violence and instability are primarily fostered by certain individuals known as actors. The conflict in Cote d'Ivoire is not an exception (Agunbiade, 2023).

The political actors in the Ivorian conflict will be better understood when considered from a holistic point of view. There is the need to bring to mind that the instability in Cote d'Ivoire directly threatens long-standing U.S. and international efforts to support a transition to peace, political stability, and democratic governance in Cote d'Ivoire, among other U.S objectives (Agunbiade, 2023). This among other identified threat makes the U.S a potential actor in the Ivorian conflict. The United States has supported the Ivorian peace process since the 2002 war, both diplomatically and financially, with funding appropriated by congress. Considering the role of the U.S. in Cote d'Ivoire as well as the active role played during the conflict, no doubt, places the U.S. as a secondary actor in the Ivorian conflict (Agunbiade, 2023).

The interest of political actors plays a major role in the conflict. Behind every actor in the Ivorian conflict is an interest as well as a motive to be achieved. Central is the interest of the political parties, Laurent Gbagbo, Allassane Quattara, the international community, the United States, France amidst other key political actors (Agunbiade, 2023). Much of the international community – with at least one exception and some qualifications among African governments-rejected Gbagbo's claim of electoral victory and endorsed Quattara as the legally elected president of Cote d'Ivoire. In the Ivorian case, the international community openly displayed their interest in disregarding the claims of the former president.

In response to Gbagbo's refusal to cede the presidency to his rival, the international community took a range of coordinated and bilateral efforts aimed at forcing him to abide by the rules of the election. These include diplomatic isolation and non-recognition of the Gbagbo government; personal travel and financial sanctions against members of the regime; constriction of credit and access to state financial assets; and the threat of military action to enforce the electoral outcome (International Crises Group, 2011).

Dissecting the Various Peacebuilding Measures in Cote d'Ivoire
The term Peace-building entered the international lexicon in 1992 when UN Secretary General-Boutros Boutros-Ghali defined it in "An Agenda for Peace" as post-conflict action to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict. An Agenda for peace, its supplement, and Agenda for Development informed the UN's approach to Peace-building throughout the 1990s (United Nations 1992). Peace-building is a multi-dimensional enterprise with several pillars: while various actors define these pillars differently, there is consensus that Peace-building has political, economic, social, security and legal dimensions, each of which requires attention.

Peace-building revolves around policies, programs, and efforts to restore stability and effectiveness of social, political, and economic institutions and structures in the wake of a war or some other debilitating or catastrophic event. Peace-building generally aims to create and ensure the conditions of 'negative peace' which is the mere absence of violent conflict engagement, and for 'positive peace', a more comprehensive understanding related to the institutionalism of justice and freedom (Galtung 1996). That there exists a connection between security and development is an acceptable tenet in peace-building, and the implications of this mutually reinforcing relationship are extensive. Peace-building involves a wide range of international donors, aid agencies, and international, regional, community, and grassroots civil society organizations.

The peace-building process in Cote d'Ivoire is not an end itself, but a means to an end. As earlier mentioned, peace-building is all-inclusive which also entails a proper understanding of the political dimensions to every conflict (Agunbiade, 2023). Invariably, this end is geared towards lasting and sustained peace within the country. Bearing in mind, that, an internal conflict is like a spiral which is not contained within a defined geographical location, but has the tendency of a multiplier effect on neighboring countries. This has become evident in certain conflict within the African region. The persistence of intra-state and civil conflicts in different regions, the breakdown of peace and processes, the relapse of a number of countries into violent conflict, and the emergence of new conflicts ensure that the demand for post-conflict Peace-building will continue unabated in the coming years and decades-despite its multiple shortcomings and

weaknesses. Against this background, peace-building in Cote d'Ivoire becomes very imperative (Agunbiade, 2003).

To reconcile and unite people that not so long ago were calling each other enemies, requires time and a concerted effort. This fact was reiterated by the Special Court of Sierra Leone, too:

> *The peace-building and reconciliation process is not finished when people peacefully co-exist. Reconciliation needs to go further: people need to understand that the only future they have is a common one and that the only way forward towards development is by working together. Working together requires more than tolerance and respect. It requires consultation, debate and agreement, an understanding of the fact that common interests can be in conflict with personal interests and that co-operation requires compromise. (Quoted in Bernard, 2009).*

Challenges of Peacebuilding in the West African State: Cote d'Ivoire

In 2005 the impasse in the battle over the eligibility of the presidential candidates in Côte d'Ivoire brought the peace process there to a grinding halt and resulted in a nearly three-year 'no peace, no war' stalemate. Fresh violence was prompted by the failure to hold elections in October owing to the intransigence of the factions on issues relating to citizenship, voting rights and land ownership and also because of the subsequent decision by the AU to extend the term of the transitional president, Laurent Gbagbo, by a year (International Crises Group 2003). The stalled implementation of the 2004 Accra III Agreement not only hampered the ability of UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire to carry out its mandated tasks but also threatened the already fragile stability in the region (Quoted in Sharon W., 2004). By the end of the year, the severity of the situation led UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to call for a sharp increase in the number of UNOCI troops in order to allow the mission to 'react robustly' if necessary.

"The failure to hold elections in October owing to factional intransigence over citizenship, voting rights, and land ownership—as well as the African Union's endorsement of an extension of the transitional president's mandate—precipitated fresh violence" (ISS|PSC Report 2020, Aljazeera, 2025).

Context & Sources:

In recent commentary (August 2020), the *PSC Insights* report explains that postponing elections and extending mandates sparks unrest: "Developments … point to a likely rise in tensions around the presidential elections… The first protest erupted in response to former president Laurent Gbagbo's name being removed from the voter's roll." (ISS|PSC Report 2020). Coverage of the *2025 Ivorian electoral landscape* highlights how electoral delays, contested voter lists, and exclusion of key figures have created a tense environment:

> *"This is not just another vote; it is a critical test … Presidential elections are meant to be pillars of stability, but in Côte d'Ivoire, they have often been catalysts for chaos." (AISayad, 2025)*

The increase in complex UN peace operations in the 1990s—involving significant civilian as well as military components and with mandates that included disarmament, human rights,

election monitoring, refugee return and support for the rebuilding of state institutions—demonstrated the difficulty of a linear progression from peacemaking, via peacekeeping to peace-building (United Nations, 2000). Many of the conflicts in which the UN and other international actors were engaged throughout the 1990s proved resistant to such an orderly sequence. Relapse into armed conflict, sporadic political violence and public disorder were persistent challenges for peace operations deploying to civil conflicts. These challenges led to increased emphasis on the need for an earlier start to peace-building activities to provide incentives to commit to peace as well as to build confidence in its potential durability among post-conflict populations (United Nations, 2009). Peace-building presents substantial challenges for peace operations, whether UN or non-UN, in both the magnitude of the project and its legitimacy.

The Magnitude of Peace-building Task:

The magnitude of the task requires priorities in peace-building this indeed is a challenge facing the peacebuilding process in Cote d'Ivoire. A fair degree of consensus has emerged in the past few years on the tasks to be accomplished, and there is some agreement on the order in which they should be tackled (United Nations Peacebuilding commission 2007). This order is based on the idea of a hierarchy of political goods provided by the state. The hierarchy of political good in Cote d'Ivoire is to a large extent determined by the political priorities of the ruling government. This gives the political dimension of the peacebuilding process. The first and prime function of the state is to provide security and, correspondingly, the first priority of post-conflict peace-building is to re-establish it.

The second priority area is the establishment of functioning law and order within the society. The current emphasis on the importance of the rule of law for post-conflict peace-building reflects the lessons from peace operations in the past decade that economic reconstruction and social rehabilitation cannot proceed without legal and administrative structures and mechanisms in place (United Nations Secretary General 2004). Taking a look at Cote d'Ivoire, it depicts a country that has seen the trauma of civil war and the damaging effect of violent conflict. The domestic focus of peace-building tends to make it an introspective process. Experiences over the past decade, however, have demonstrated the importance of regional dynamics for post-conflict peace-building. The tasks of multilateral peace operations are influenced to a significant degree by the politics and actions of neighboring states. These are some of the challenges facing the peacebuilding process in Cote d'Ivoire.

The Peace-building Time Frame:

Similarly, the magnitude of peace-building is complicated by the time frame in which it is undertaken. Peace-building attempts to compress into a few years evolutions that have taken centuries. The limited duration of most international peace operations is a particular problem for effective peace-building. If the process is too short, the risk of a return to conflict is high. In such situations, hasty decisions may have been made. Haiti's relapse into conflict in 2004, after six peace missions over the past 10 years, is the most potent illustration of the dangers of the international community departing before post-conflict state structures and processes are sufficiently stable and durable to provide public security, welfare and opportunities for development. The question of time frame is complicated by the lack of any international mechanism to objectively assess when the structures of a state have reached a level of

stability that can make peacebuilding self-sustaining. In the absence of such mechanisms, the end of an international peacebuilding operation is determined more by the political interests, priorities and financial resources of the states and organizations involved than by a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the post-conflict state (Quoted in Sharon, 2004).

On 30 June 2015, the government of Côte d'Ivoire announced the end of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process, one of the key components of its post-conflict reconstruction strategy. According to the government, 85% of former combatants have been successfully disarmed and reintegrated into society (United Nations Security Council 2015).

Roadmap to Peacebuilding in Cote d'Ivoire
Authorities in Côte d'Ivoire identified the DDR process as one of the key priorities for post-conflict reconstruction. A single entity was created in August 2012 to manage the process – the Authority for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (ADDR). It identified 74 000 ex-combatants to go through the process. By the deadline of 30 June 2015, ADDR declared having disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated close to 60 000 ex-combatants, which is 90% of its target. It collected 20 000 weapons and 1 million rounds of ammunition (United Nations Security Council 2015). Three destinations were identified for demobilized ex-combatants: back to school, trade and agriculture. Given the poor level of education of most ex-combatants, trade and agriculture absorb the majority. The discrepancies noted between the numbers of demobilized combatants versus the weapons collected are justified by the fact that not all ex-combatants have weapons to surrender. In Côte d'Ivoire successful DDR stories can end up becoming a nightmare for other countries. For example, Liberia became a contributor to armed conflicts through the actions of mercenaries as seen during the post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The study critically pinpoints that if political processes are not remodeled from the short-term power dominated interests towards longer-term co-operative and people centered interests, conflicts in Africa will continue. These borders on the influence of political actors in a peacebuilding process. Therefore, conflict resolution should not be the responsibility of a privileged few alone, but rather be a participatory process in every sense involving all affected people. No doubt, there has been a damaging effect of the negative influence of political actors in the peace-building process in Cote d'Ivoire. To stem the tide of future relapse to violent conflict in Cote d'Ivoire, it is imperative to have a self-sustaining and successful peace-building process in the country.

Due to the difficulties that the ADDR faced during the past three years, it is necessary to develop a post-June 2015 strategy to deal with residual elements that might be left out. In response to this, the government of Côte d'Ivoire, after declaring its mission accomplished, dissolved the ADDR and created a Centre for Coordination of Social Reintegration to deal with the residual elements. This should not end there, but the CCSR should be strengthened to further engage in the process of continued peace-building. Some of the ex-combatants linked to the former leader Laurent Gbagbo still lack confidence in the process. A large group remains in exile. Ex-combatants and former military commanders still have considerable influence on non-registered ex-combatants. The DDR process must be holistic and not half-baked.

Finally, African intellectuals and professionals in the field of conflict studies should seek to inculcate African ethical values into modern academic structures, especially in conflict resolution (Brock-Utne,1996).

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